

# Speak Out

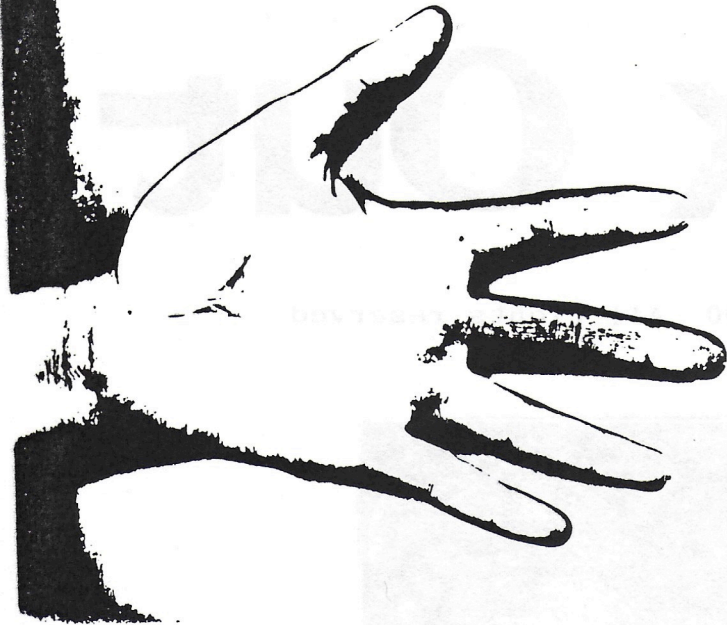
Survivors' Network (Sussex)

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## INSIDE

Boosting awareness  
A letter from a healing survivor  
Living next door to the abuser  
Guidelines for therapists  
More books, meetings, info...



### Management Committee Update

The Management Committee has been meeting regularly over the last five months, following elections in May.

In that time, we have achieved major breakthroughs in care for women suffering from the after-effects of child sexual abuse.

We have: (1) installed a telephone helpline, which is staffed three sessions a week, to offer emergency counselling, or just a sympathetic ear to women in crisis and offer local and national information.

(2) Set up a new office, after much frantic searching, to give the Survivors Network a much-needed base for paperwork and business matters and a future resource centre.

(3) Set up a scheme for training and supervising counsellors to staff the help-line, with a view to offering a 24-hour service.

(4) Provided an opportunity for the creation of self-help groups. We hope to have an on-going therapy group led by a trained facilitator.

(5) A fund-raiser/development worker was employed for four months to put in grant applications and liaise with local organisations. We now urgently need to develop this role to ensure funding over the next financial year, to co-ordinate all workers and provide as wide a service as possible to survivors. A paid worker will be employed for this purpose in the near future.

(6) Held monthly forums to debate the needs of survivors themselves. Some of the topics introduced by survivors include setting up a drop-in centre/safe house, establishing therapy groups, transexuality, support groups for partners (male and female), linking the Survivors Network with statutory organisations. If you have ideas on these and other issues, we would be interested to hear your contribution at the next forum on October 25 at 251 Preston Road, Brighton, 7-9pm.

And there are many other projects in the pipeline...

Anyone interested in becoming further involved in the Survivors Network Management Committee or in training groups should come along to our annual general meeting in early December, when elections will also take place.

## Man, 40, bailed

Jobless Brian Westgate, 40, of Montague Street, Brighton, accused of threatening to kill a 15-year-old girl and of assaulting a 12-year-old boy causing actual harm on September 28 was remanded in custody by Brighton magistrates.

HOVE Council has created a new committee to keep up with demand from premises for exhibitions, conferences, wedding receptions and functions.

Lynne Kerr, 36, will become manager for civic buildings, Hove and Portslade town hall. The former hotel manager has hobbies including riding, sailing and



# News

We are in the news  
Did you see us in the Evening Argus and hear us on Radio Sussex?

Less than ten per cent of what was present last century now remains, most having been Hove planning that the report would for the valley. "It has shown large significance, but you never you ask for a report like this."

## Women tell of life after sexual abuse

A NEW helpline for women sexually abused in childhood has received a steady stream of calls since it opened.

Brighton group Survivors Network runs the helpline three nights a week and has taken around 100 calls from worried women in four months.

The network, which started in March thanks to a grant from East Sussex County

Council, offers advice for women on how to cope with abuse from inside or outside the family.

The group is holding a special awareness day at the Brighthelm Centre on October 13 to show the public how it works and what the victims of abuse can do to help themselves.

Organiser Carole Shaw is not surprised by the volume of inquiries.

She said: "There are a lot of women out there who have been the victims of abuse and many of them need someone to talk to. But there are also lots of women who are too afraid to come forward."

"As well as the helpline we run self-help groups and therapy sessions, and we have 80 women on our mailing list."

"Much of the general public is ignorant about sexual abuse because it is such a taboo subject. I hope the awareness day will open a few people's eyes."

The day will feature a series of speakers and organisers want it to have a fun atmosphere to show that women who have suffered can not just survive but thrive and enjoy life as well.

Other attractions include videos and an exhibition of artwork. A creche will also be available.

to paren them to could remember.

Darren Harmer, 24, of Kiplin Avenue, Woodingdean Brighton, accused of two charges of wounding, as well as assault and affray after failing to answer bail, was sent, in custody, to Lewes Crown Court for trial.

Martin P address of Elm were Col in on prof a c

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## Rape case for trial

A MAN accused of kidnapping and raping a girl of nine was sent for trial by magistrates at Chichester.

Brett Jones, 20, is also accused of threatening to kill the girl and wounding her.

The offences are alleged to

have taken place while the girl was on holiday at Scotts Farm caravan park at East Wittering near Chichester.

Jones, an unemployed labourer of Davenport Road, Bulbrook, Bracknell, Berks, was remanded in custody until his trial at Chichester.

post to people who... other... assistant... r lists horse food as her

# FRIEND....

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A letter from a survivor to her best friend...

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For me personally, this flat seems to have brought into being a time of rest and harmony. I found that I love being at home, being a housewife and doing 'mumsy' things. I have at last realised how precious my children, family and friends are - although it seems to have taken an eternity of searching to work this out. Each day as I sit quietly, this feels like a recovery time from many years of bombardment. I know now how lucky I am.

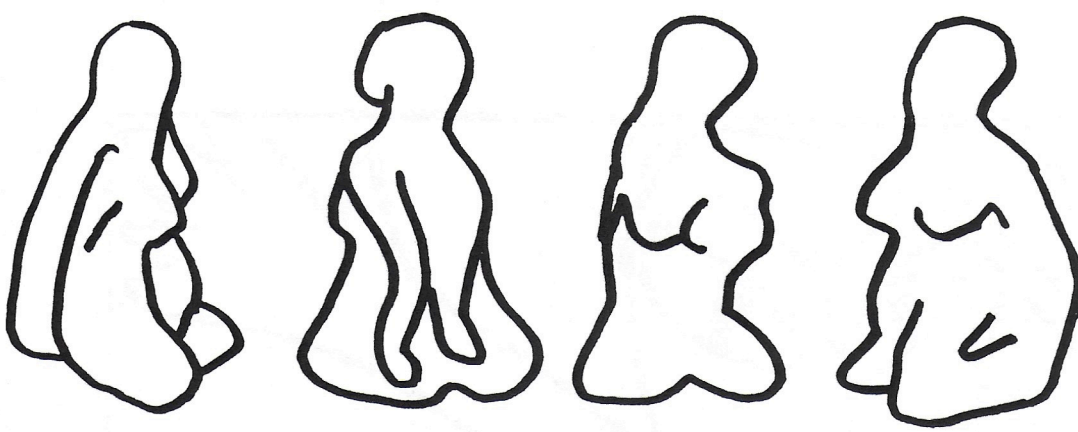
I know I have closed a book and completed another part of my life. I sit often and read through the last chapters and I can see what situations and people were not vital to the plot. I see the mistakes I have made, the pain, the hurt - both felt and inflicted - and the endless streams of learning. I have had to look at why I have aided and abetted the past two years, making them even more difficult than they needed to be.

I have found some of the reasons why. I went to the core and saw truly for the first time the 'child within'. We each have this within us, but for some of us that child has been left orphaned, feeling rejected and frightened. I saw that not only was that hurting child me, I was also abusing her, as did once my abuser. I began to identify with why I had grasped at any person that looked as if they were offering love - but aware at the same time that at any given moment this could be instantly removed. In my fear and confusion, I confused love and sex, because something was better than nothing. Or so I thought then. I saw the power I had over men and it gave me my misguided weapon of revenge. I see now that we each have our own power and I was using mine destructively.

As a sexually abused child, I had been thrown into a world of darkness, doubt, shadows and secrets. But we create our safety in that place, where we are alone. For being alone means that nobody can hurt you again. A world where we are frightened to be, yet too afraid to leave, because what if....?

To step into the world once more of light, which is life, is to allow people to see you. Not knowing whether to go back into the loneliness that you know or to go forward into the unknown. I have been one of the lucky ones, for always there has been somebody to help me take that giant step. A step that feels to take forever... a step that feels like it has been one forward and then ten back.





I have taken the majority of my steps and in doing so have left behind the battered cocoon of the child and have entered the world of adults. What is left of the child will in time heal - I know that I will have to parent her and love her and bring her to eventual independence, as is the role of all parents. I have stopped feeling blame for the childhood that was ripped from her, for she is blameless.

The compassion I feel for her, I hope, will in time go out to the many hundreds like her. No longer will I allow that man to abuse me or anybody else - I do not need, want or deserve it.

So having said all that, I am now ready to be the author of my new book. Some of the old book will continue to filter through because it is that which has made me what I am today. Some of it must, however, be left behind. I have had to let go of some friendships, which saddens me, but at least I know now that letting go is not losing.

Adulthood brings its own problems and having realised that I am indeed a woman, I found myself being swept along on the current of pride which was mixed with vanity and a rising ego. I never dreamt, with my lack of self-worth, that I could be vain, but it crept up and caught me totally off-guard. This has interfered with us as friends.

What has happened is that the clinging child has gone and the adult is left with a desire that maybe we can begin to be as friends. I tried to be a friend to you, but in the ignorant selfishness of the self, I never once asked what you would like.

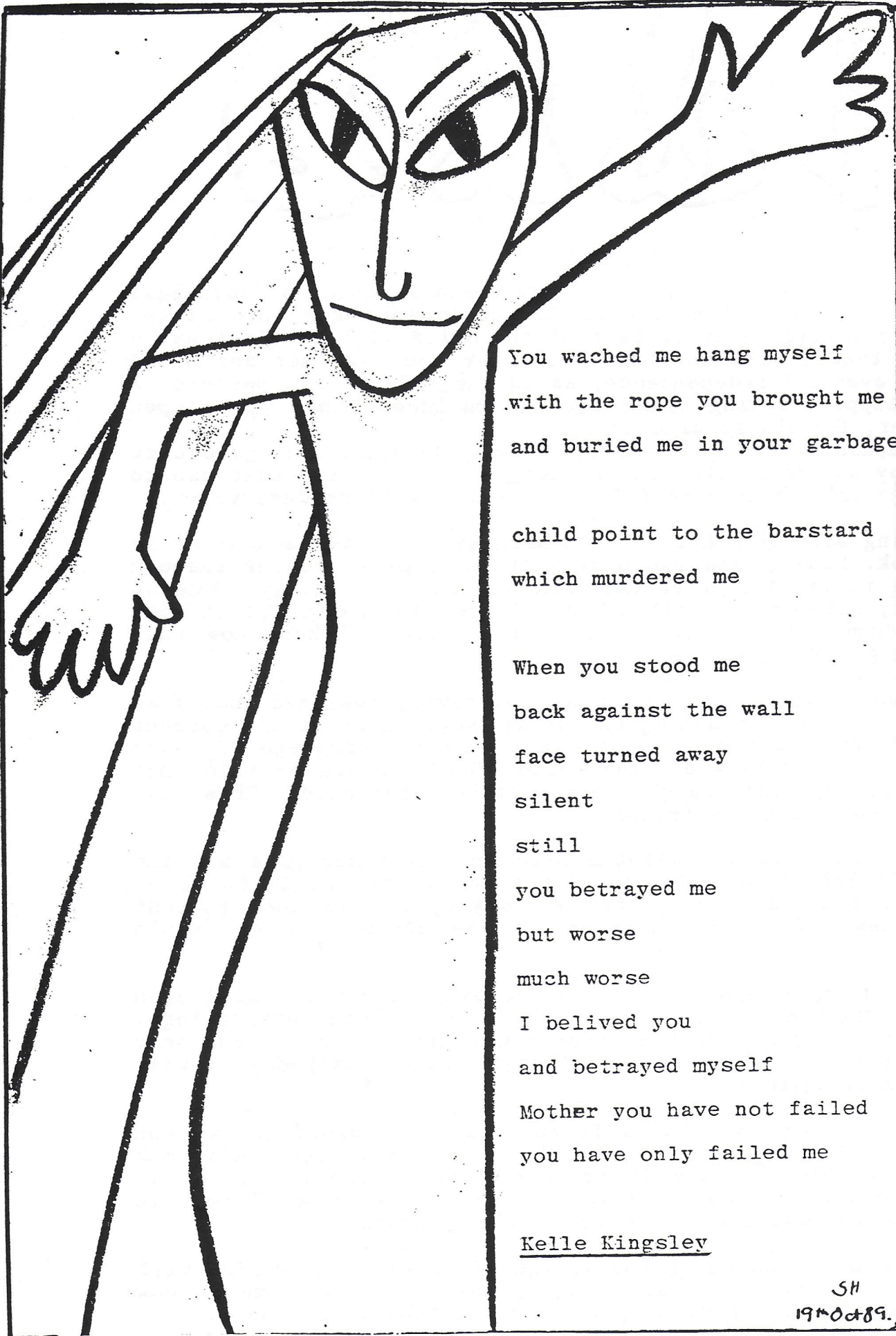
So I am doing so now. I can see the many labels I placed upon you - wanting and needing you to be a substitute 'everything'. I cannot apologise for that, for I knew no better - I can only say that to the very best of my ability as I am today, I will not do that again.

However I do believe that life in total is twofold and we can only do as we are allowed to do. We have to give to receive and receive to give because in truth we are of the earth and we need nourishment equally if relationships are to be. I hope in many areas I have learnt the art of friendship.

This was unplanned until today, when I awoke this morning with a letter to you in my mind. So I guess the right time is now and I accept full responsibility for all that I have said.

If I do not receive a reply from you I will for the first time accept it and not allow any hurt in.

Your friend,



You wached me hang myself  
with the rope you brought me  
and buried me in your garbage

child point to the barstard  
which murdered me

When you stood me  
back against the wall  
face turned away  
silent

still  
you betrayed me  
but worse  
much worse

I belived you  
and betrayed myself  
Mother you have not failed  
you have only failed me

Kelle Kingsley

SH  
1940489.

# neighbours

A letter to an abusive stepfather from his step-daughter...

To John Murphy (my next door neighbour)

When I was offered this flat next door to you, I bet you thought I wouldn't take it. I thought, why should I turn down a new flat just because you lived next door. We decided it was a lovely flat and the garden would be ideal for the boys. We accepted the flat, I thought I could handle it.

I don't use the garden much because I feel you are watching me. I feel you are leering at me, just like you used to. I hear you having violent rows with my mum just like you always did.

She always walks out, just like she used to when I was at home. In those days you would come to me. I wonder what you do now, when she walks out.

Every time she walks out I see her and it makes me feel sick.

It reminds me of your evil and sick ways. I used to feel sorry for my mum. Especially on those occasions when you would call us from our beds.

You would beat her because we wouldn't say we loved you. She always took a good beating before we said it. She would blame us for not saying it sooner.

Now I think she could have got out of that situation years ago. She could have saved herself a lot of beatings.

She could have saved me from a lot of abuse. Instead, while you were abusing me one day in your sick way for your pleasure, she would abuse me the next day to take out her anger, which should have been directed at you.

I wish you were both dead. I go to work thinking I can get your evilness off my mind. Even that doesn't work any more, I get reminded of you there too.

There is a man there with the same name as you. He has the same accent, he spits in the bin like you, and he pisses in a bucket at night like you always did. I always had to wash out your smelly pissy bucket. Now I have to do his instead. The only difference is, he doesn't abuse me and I get paid to do his work.

Maybe people wonder what it is like, living next door to the people who abused you in every possible way. Well, I can tell those people that no matter how strong you think you are, it is shit and utter hell.

I have coped with it for a year now and I am very anxious to move.

Who can help me move?

The people in authority can, but where are they when I need them? Just where they were when I needed them all those years ago. Sitting on the sidelines saying they sympathise with me.....

Lover

You are the undeserving subject  
Of Generations of Anger,  
and I feel powerless  
in the storms of my own rage,  
Calmed now only by drugs  
and your absence.

Your Absence -

For your presence fills me with fear.  
Is it Love you hold out to me  
or just another cord to bind my Soul?  
Can I believe your tears, believe that you cry as much  
for the shattered child I was as for the pain You feel?  
Or are these things only Traps,  
to be Sprung  
If I comfort you,  
If I trust you?

Life,

for some,  
is a Nine-To-Five affair;  
No Hate  
No Love  
No Despair -  
But a shared yawn  
and a smile

"One more drink before....?"

"Yes that would be nice and while ...."

And drivel drowns the day.

And some retire

to rise to countless Mondays,

"Can you take the kids, Sue said she may....."

For others,

For us, sometimes,  
Life is a crumbling trench  
dug into a battlefield unknown.



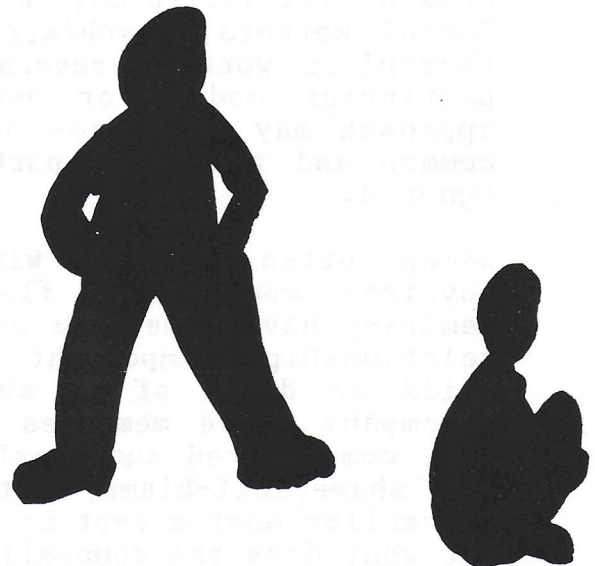


# poetry

## TURN TO FACE ME

Turn your face to the light  
let the glare hide your shame  
your deceit  
turn on the heat  
wash away the life  
let the hate seep through my pores  
paint your face with confusion  
fool me  
replace my eyes  
with your distorted images  
and now  
somehow  
life will never be the same

### Our Fathers



Our father who art in Heaven  
please let me die before I reach the age of seven,  
Hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done  
I'm scared, I'm frightened, I cant take anymore fucking from anyone.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
Mummy where are you? You loved me you said,  
And forgive us our tresspasses and we forgive them that tresspass  
against us,  
DONT YOU DARE SCREAM, OR MAKE A FUSS!!!  
And lead us not into temptation,  
I beg, let me stay in hospital for observation,  
But deliver us from evil,  
All this is unbelievable,  
For thine is the kingdom, the power the glory,  
Where are you God or is the blood too gory,  
For ever and ever Amen Are men.  
Going to be allowed to abuse your children.....

by Sharon Benedict.

© 1990



## CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE - THE THERAPISTS' ISSUES



In recent years, perhaps as a result of interest by the media in the 'topic' of child sexual abuse, some adults who were abused as children have been able to acknowledge and seek help for the lasting effects of their experiences.

There are many women now who look for counselling or therapy in groups or on an individual basis who may not have been able to disclose their trauma to anyone before. They look to voluntary organisations and the statutory agencies for help, and though the resources are pitifully meagre there are some dedicated workers, male and female, willing to hear them. (Here the focus is on women counsellors).

By its very nature it is an extremely demanding area of work and it would be impossible not to be affected by it. There are many professionals engaged in long term work, brief therapy, crisis work and so on, face to face and on telephone helplines. Social Workers, Psychiatrists, counsellors and many different therapists work in several ways with their clients following particular models or evolving their own, and though each approach may have pros and cons there are elements that are common and there are particular difficulties which cannot be ignored.

Women often present with frightening symptoms, nightmares, physical complaints, flashbacks, phobias and obsessions. Memories have sometimes been triggered by problems in intimate relationships, important life events such as the birth of a child or death of an abuser or parent. The emotions which accompany these memories and the 'here and now' events are raw, complicated and puzzling. There is anger mixed with guilt and shame, self-blame, hate and love, disgust and hurt. The counsellor must accept it all if any sense is to be made of it. But what does the counsellor feel as she lives through the pain of unravelling another woman's abuse? And what does she do with her emotions?

Issues needing to be addressed:

Every counsellor needs to examine her own attitudes towards child sexual abuse, towards violence, towards sexuality, towards society. She needs to look at her own prejudices and bias, her own childhood experiences and her political viewpoint. (Where is she in relation to Feminist interpretations for example?) It appears that however well-worked out she may feel in preparation for work with victims of abuse, she is going to be shocked and her reactions are going to surprise her. (Indeed perhaps she needs to be sensitive enough to always be shocked?)

Working in the area of sexual abuse is complex and draining, and the counsellor must have regular personal supervision if she is not to get 'burnt out' or become so saturated with it that she is no use to the client.

She needs to develop a support system and techniques for looking after her own basic needs in much the same way as she probably recommends to her clients. The head is working overtime but the body forgets to eat regularly! Physiological needs remain unmet whilst she gets a huge amount of recognition from peers who admire her work! She also needs to be honest with herself about the way the work is affecting her.

For example in the beginning she may be in a state of shock after a disclosure that anyone could be so cruel to a child. This naturally increases the feeling of wanting to protect. (Especially if she has children of her own)

She may be outraged at male perpetrators and transfer her feelings to all men generally or to male colleagues or friends. Some of this anger may be relieved by fantasising about retribution (followed by guilt etc. etc.)! She is unexpectedly put in touch with her own potentially violent and abusive feelings towards others.

She may have to reexamine her attitude towards pornography, sex and violence because of a new understanding of the abuse of power in a male dominated society. Sexism may become a focus of everyday life for the first time.

It may be that she looks at non-protecting parents differently and experiences hate of mothers including her own.

So the counsellor can suddenly lose faith in her own circle of friends, hate her parents and become depressed about the evils of the society we live in!!! And worse, she then ceases to enjoy sex with her partner too. In fact she can't stand her partner any more and won't be touched!

It is understood that there is a higher incidence of abuse in those workers who are in the 'caring professions' so the chances are that the counsellor may also be reliving childhood experiences of her own that were abusive. (Rescuing a victim and creating a 'Survivor' might actually help to remodel the counsellor's own family). In any case most women have experienced some form of abuse, (emotional, physical, sexual), been harrassed in the street or workplace and so on, and the counsellor is easily led into identifying with the client.

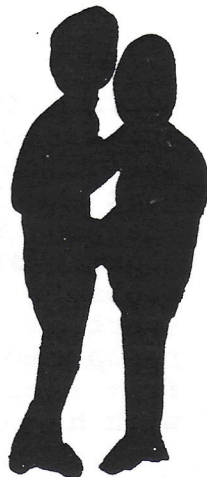
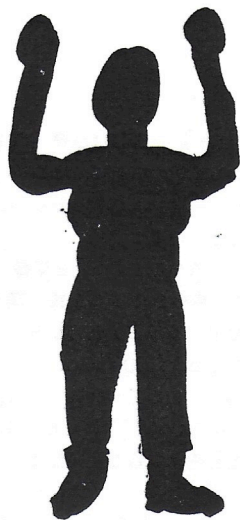
If the counsellor and client collude at this stage it is unlikely that either can shift or grow, to move from victim to survivor.

It is necessary then for the counsellor to seek out ways of gaining some perspective on her relationship with the survivor, and she must renegotiate her position with intimate friends and colleagues if she is to maintain a sane viewpoint and help those courageous women who manage to seek help and put their little trust in her.

\* Please contact us if you are interested in joining a support group for workers with survivors.

Carole Shaw is collecting information from women survivors about their experiences as children. The data will be used to examine how women's needs can best be met, and how we can inform workers with children, who are victims of abuse, about important issues such as long-term effects and therapeutic needs. If you would be willing to fill in an anonymous questionnaire please contact Carole.

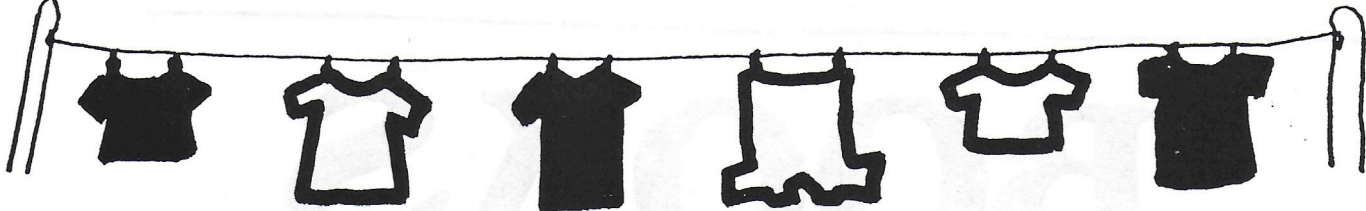
P.O. Box 188 Brighton BN1 7JW.



Did you see the wonderful exhibitions of women's artwork in the Taking Liberties programme?

Would you like to create your own artwork? resolve some personal issues? Find out about art therapy?

If so contact Carole on 550534



SURVIVORS NETWORK T-shirts

Available in black, white, green, or navy from P.O. Box 188 Brighton BN1 7JW

£6.50 plus 75p postage and packaging or collect them at the next forum on October 25 at 251 Preston Road, Brighton, 7pm.

Please indicate your second choice in case the first is unavailable.

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MANY, MANY thanks to Amanda Dean for her support and hard work over the last month; Sue Rigby for her patience and endless help and encouragement with proof reading and the press release.

BIG THANK-YOUS TO... East Sussex Social Services Department, for providing us with our new offices and to Chris Evershed of Brighton Health Authority for helping us with temporary accommodation.

THANKS a lot to British Telecom for their cooperation in giving us a new telephone helpline number...and here it is:  
566555      566555      566555      566555      566555      566555

CAROLE says thank you to all members of the Management Committee and many friends for all the hard work involved in organising the Awareness Day.

AND finally....THANK YOU to the Women's Committee of Brighton Council for their encouragement and publicity about the Survivors Network.

JUMBLE, JUMBLE and more JUMBLE!

Jumble, clothes, bric-a-brac wanted for bootsale in aid of the Survivors Network. Call Kelle Kingsley on Brighton 502 866.

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# BOOKS

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## The Psychology of Today's Woman

eds. Toni Bernay and Dorothy Canter

(Harvard. 1989 £10.25)

Written mainly by American women analysts this is a collection of essays examining central aspects of therapeutic work with women — notions of sexuality, mother-daughter relationships, independence, marriage and divorce, creativity, feminism etc. Not an easy read.

## Ending Men's Violence Against their Partners. One Road to Peace

by Richard Stordeur and Richard Stille.

(Sage 1989 £13.95)

A detailed account of treatment programmes which also examines the impact on therapists working with violent clients. Practical, profeminist — aimed at workers with victims and victimizers.

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### Child Sexual Abuse - Booklist

If I Should Die Before I Wake

The Color Purple

Cry Hard and Swim

Father-Daughter Rape

I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings

Louise Armstrong

Alice Walker

Jaqueline Spring

Ward.E

M. Angelou

Women's Press 1983

Virago 1987

Women's Press 1984

Virago 1984

heavy going but worth  
the read!



"you must have  
colluded for it  
to have gone on  
for so long"  
(local psychiatrist)

A word from the "experts"...

"Incest is a sign of  
a disorganised family"

"From our clinical observations  
it seems that incestuous  
relationships are often a  
distorted search for caring  
and warmth"  
(Rosenfield)

"contemporary psychological  
research has shown that children  
have sexual feelings and desires  
from a very early age."

"of course he must  
be ill or he never would  
have behaved so out of  
character."

"an abused childhood leads to  
an abusive parenthood". (Renzvize)

"Then there was  
the astonishing thing  
that in every case blame  
was laid on perverse acts by  
the father - though it was hardly  
credible that perverted acts against  
children were so general" (Freud)

"they pretend  
they don't like it, they  
act virtuous, but they  
love it really."

"Her mother was  
depressed at the time,  
working long hours,  
getting older - not  
much fun -"

"the sexually abusive father does  
not use his child primarily for  
sexual gratification, but principally  
as a means of reconfirming and  
discharging his low self-esteem"  
(Hank Giaretto)

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SURVIVORS NETWORK (SUSSEX)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

TELEPHONE.....

OCCUPATION.....

I should like to apply for membership of the Survivors' Network, and receive information about meetings and projects. I enclose a cheque for £15 (payable to the Survivors' Network).

signed.....

*concessions only £5!*

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The Survivors' Network  
P.O.Box  
188  
Brighton  
BN1 7JW

Who can I talk to?



have you tried the Survivors' helpline?  
566555